

SEVASTOPOL

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Sevastopol by Lyof N. Tolstoi & Isabel F. Hapgood

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LYOF N. TOLSTOI & ISABEL F. HAPGOOD

SEVASTOPOL

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BY

COUNT LYOF N. TOLSTOÏ

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN

BY

ISABEL F. HAPGOOD

AUTHORIZED EDITION.

NEW YORK

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SEVASTOPOL.

SEVASTOPOL IN DECEMBER, 1854.

THE flush of morning has but just begun to tinge the sky above Sapun Mountain; the dark blue surface of the sea has already cast aside the shades of night and awaits the first ray to begin a play of merry gleams; cold and mist are wafted from the bay; there is no snow—all is black, but the morning frost pinches the face and crackles underfoot, and the far-off, unceasing roar of the sea, broken now and then by the thunder of the firing in Sevastopol, alone disturbs the calm of the morning. It is dark on board the ships; it has just struck eight bells.

Toward the north the activity of the day begins gradually to replace the nocturnal quiet; here the relief guard has passed clanking their arms, there the doctor is already hastening to the hospital, further on the soldier has crept out of his earth

hut and is washing his sunburnt face in ice-encrusted water, and, turning towards the crimsoning east, crosses himself quickly as he prays to God; here a tall and heavy camel-wagon has dragged creaking to the cemetery, to bury the bloody dead, with whom it is laden nearly to the top. You go to the wharf—a peculiar odor of coal, manure, dampness, and of beef strikes you; thousands of objects of all sorts—wood, meat, gabions, flour, iron, and so forth—lie in heaps about the wharf; soldiers of various regiments, with knapsacks and muskets, without knapsacks and without muskets, throng thither, smoke, quarrel, drag weights aboard the steamer which lies smoking beside the quay; unattached two-oared boats, filled with all sorts of people,—soldiers, sailors, merchants, women,—land at and leave the wharf.

“To the Grafsky, Your Excellency? be so good.” Two or three retired sailors rise in their boats and offer you their services.

You select the one who is nearest to you, you step over the half-decomposed carcass of a brown horse, which lies there in the mud beside the boat, and reach the stern. You quit the shore. All

about you is the sea, already glittering in the morning sun, in front of you is an aged sailor, in a camel's-hair coat, and a young, white-headed boy, who work zealously and in silence at the oars. You gaze at the motley vastness of the vessels, scattered far and near over the bay, and at the small black dots of boats moving about on the shining azure expanse, and at the bright and beautiful buildings of the city, tinted with the rosy rays of the morning sun, which are visible in one direction, and at the foaming white line of the quay, and the sunken ships from which black tips of masts rise sadly here and there, and at the distant fleet of the enemy faintly visible as they rock on the crystal horizon of the sea, and at the streaks of foam on which leap salt bubbles beaten up by the oars; you listen to the monotonous sound of voices which fly to you over the water, and the grand sounds of firing, which, as it seems to you, is increasing in Sevastopol.

It cannot be that, at the thought that you too are in Sevastopol, a certain feeling of manliness, of pride, has not penetrated your soul, and that the blood has not begun to flow more swiftly through your veins.